

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A portable storage device containing a network identity and configuration information for a processing unit that is connectable to a data communications network and includes a device reader for reading the portable storage device,
5 the portable storage device comprising storage and an access controller, the storage holding a network identity and configuration information for the processing unit.
- 10 2. The portable storage device of claim 1, wherein the configuration information comprises software configuration information.
3. The portable storage device of claim 1, wherein the storage is configured to containing at least one file.
- 15 4. The portable storage device of claim 3, wherein said configuration information is stored in said at least one file.
5. The portable storage device of claim 1, comprising at least one secure storage portion accessible only under the control of the access controller.
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6. The portable storage device of claim 6, wherein the storage holds at least one encryption key.
- 25 7. The portable storage device of claim 7, wherein said at least one encryption key is held in said secure storage portion.

8. The portable storage device of claim 5, wherein at least one network security encryption key is held in said secure storage portion.
9. The portable storage device of claim 5, wherein at least one file is configured in said secure storage portion.
10. The portable storage device of claim 6, wherein the access controller is operable to perform key-key verification of a request encrypted by a request key supplied from the processing unit and, in response to the request key verifying correctly, to return to the processing unit an access key derived from said at least one encryption key to permit access to the secure storage portion.
11. The portable storage device of claim 10, wherein the access controller is subsequently operable to respond to a command from the processing unit that is encrypted using the access key to access the secure storage portion.
12. The portable storage device of claim 1, wherein the storage in the portable storage device comprises random access memory.
13. The portable storage device of claim 1, wherein the access controller is a programmed microcontroller.
14. The portable storage device of claim 1, wherein the portable storage device is a smart card.
15. The portable storage device of claim 1, wherein the network identity comprises a MAC address.

16. The portable storage device of claim 1, wherein the configuration information comprises information describing a desired initial state of executable programming to be implemented by the processing unit.
- 5 17. A processing unit connectable to a data communications network, the processing unit having a device reader for a portable storage device that includes storage and an access controller, the storage holding a network identity and configuration information for the processing unit, the processing unit being operable to access the storage of the portable storage device to read
10 a stored network identity and configuration information for the processing unit on initialisation of the processing unit.
18. The processing unit of claim 17, wherein the processing unit is further operable to write configuration information to the storage of the portable
15 storage device.
19. The processing unit of claim 18, wherein the processing unit is operable to access the configuration information in the storage of the portable device using a file system.
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20. The processing unit claim 17, wherein the storage holds at least one encryption key, the processing unit being operable to access a secure portion of the storage by supplying a key-encrypted request to the access controller, and, in response to receipt of an access key from the access controller, being operable
25 to send an encrypted command to access the content of the storage of the portable storage device.

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21. The processing unit of claim 20, wherein, in response to the return of the access key, the processing unit is operable to use the access key to encrypt a command for access to a secure storage in the portable storage device.
- 5 22. The processing unit of claim 17, wherein the portable storage device is a smart card, the access controller is a microcontroller and the device reader is a smart card reader.
- 10 23. The processing unit of claim 17, wherein the network identity comprises a MAC address.
- 15 24. The processing unit of claim 17, wherein the configuration information comprises information describing a desired initial state of executable programming to be implemented by the processing unit.
- 20 25. The processing unit of claim 17, comprising a service processor, the service processor being programmed to control reading of the portable storage device.
26. The processing unit of claim 25, wherein the service processor is a microcontroller.
27. The processing unit of claim 17, wherein the processing unit is a computer server.
- 25 28. The processing unit of claim 17, wherein the processing unit is a rack mountable computer server.

29. A control program for a processing unit connectable to a data communications network, the processing unit having a device reader for a portable storage device that includes storage and an access controller, the storage storing a network identity and configuration information for the processing unit, the control program being carried by a carrier medium and being operable to access a stored network identity and configuration information from the storage of the portable storage device on initialisation of the processing unit.
30. The control program of claim 29, wherein the control program is further operable to write configuration information to the storage of the portable storage device.
31. The control program of claim 30, wherein the control program is operable to access the configuration information in the storage of the portable device using a file system.
32. The control program of claim 29, wherein the control program is operable to access a secure portion of the storage of the portable storage device by supplying a key-encrypted request to the access controller, and, in response to receipt of an access key from the access controller, being operable to send an encrypted command to access the content of the storage of the portable storage device.
33. The control program of claim 32, wherein, in response to the return of the access key, the control program is operable to use the access key to encrypt a command for access to secure storage in the portable storage device.

34. The control program of claim 29, wherein the portable storage device is a smart card, the access controller is a microcontroller and the device reader is a smart card reader.
- 5 35. The control program of claim 29, wherein the network identity comprises a MAC address.
36. The control program of claim 29, wherein the configuration information comprises information describing a desired initial state of executable programming to be implemented by the processing unit.
- 10 37. The control program of claim 29, comprising a service processor, the service processor being programmed to control reading of the portable storage device.
- 15 38. The control program of claim 29, wherein the carrier medium is a storage medium.
39. The control program of claim 29, wherein the carrier medium is a transmission medium.
- 20 40. The control program of claim 29, wherein the processing unit comprises a service processor, the control program controlling operation of the service processor.
- 25 41. The control program of claim 29, wherein the service processor is a microcontroller.

42. A microcontroller comprising a control program for a processing unit connectable to a data communications network, the processing unit having a device reader for a portable storage device that includes storage and an access controller, the storage storing a network identity and configuration information for the processing unit, the control program being operable to access a stored network identity and configuration information from the storage of the portable storage device on initialisation of the processing unit.
43. A computer server comprising a device reader for reading a portable storage device receivable therein, a processor, memory and a microcontroller, wherein
- the microcontroller is operable as a service processor and is connected to read the content of storage in a portable storage device mounted in the device reader, and
 - the microcontroller comprises a control program operable to access a stored network identity and configuration information for the computer server from the storage of the portable storage device on initialisation of the computer server.